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RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000006

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/E, AF/RSA, AND PM/PPA
CJTF-HOA FOR POLAD
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA-WATCHER

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [EWWT](#) [MOPS](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#) [PTER](#) [DJ](#) [SO](#) [XA](#)
SUBJECT: SOMALI PIRACY - DJIBOUTI RECOMMENDS USG
PARTICIPATION IN JAN. 26 IMO CONFERENCE

REF: A. 08 SECSTATE 133199 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. 08 DJIBOUTI 957 (NOTAL)

Classified By: DCM ERIC WONG. REASON: 1.4 (A) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST. Djiboutian Foreign Minister Youssef confirmed that the GODJ would participate in the Jan. 13-14 Contact Group on Somali Piracy (CGSP) to be held in New York, and strongly urged USG participation in a regional International Maritime Organization (IMO) conference to be held January 26 in Djibouti, which is expected to address legal frameworks for prosecuting Somali pirates. France has apparently already been invited and plans to attend. Post requests Department confirm whether the IMO has invited the USG to the January 26 conference. Post supports USG participation in this conference, ideally by a senior USG representative who could discuss the outcome of the Jan. 13-14 CGSP. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador met with Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssef on January 4 to discuss demarche points (ref A) submitted previously to the MFA via note verbale. FM Youssef expressed his support of the USG-led CGSP, and noted that the draft Statement of Principles tracked with previous statements by the GODJ. Youssef said the GODJ advocated the coordination of different efforts to combat Somali piracy, citing separate initiatives in the region by actors including the EU (Operation Atalanta), China, possibly Japan, and even some Arab states (who reportedly were considering contributing maritime forces). Djibouti would support any initiative that improved security of the strategic Bab-al-Mandeb Strait, he said, but the GODJ did not seek a "multiplication" of initiatives. Citing his recent discussions with the Government of Yemen, Youssef said France had already approached Sanaa regarding a possible tripartite agreement to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden. Yemeni officials may be interested in such a tripartite agreement with Djibouti and the United States, as well, he said, noting previous tripartite cooperation against Somali terrorist targets.

[1](#)3. (C) To foster concerted international action against Somali piracy, Djibouti would host an International Maritime Organization (IMO) conference on January 26, Youssef said. The conference, a follow-up to previous IMO conferences in Tanzania and Kenya, would include not only representatives of states bordering the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden, but also France. The conference aimed at finalizing a MOU on judicial processes (e.g., the establishment of tribunals) to prosecute pirates, in accordance with the 1988 Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime

Navigation.

¶4. (C) FM Youssouf strongly advocated U.S. participation in the January 26 IMO conference, by a senior USG representative who could discuss the outcome of the January 13-14 CGSP, but noted that invitations to the conference would come from the IMO, not the GODJ.

¶5. (C) COMMENT. As previously reported (ref B), Djibouti actively supports international efforts to combat Somali piracy, due partly to its dependence on port revenues but also given its political role in seeking to promote UN-led efforts to strengthen Somali reconciliation and stability.
END COMMENT.
SWAN